

operation; but it is to be feared that capitalists will not be induced to embark in such undertakings, before they are assured, from the experience acquired by individual enterprise, that a remunerating return will be realised.

Glasgow, it is known, holds an unenviable pre-eminence in respect to mortality; and its own denizens of the west,—indeed, of much of the east, know little of the cause, and the casual visitor discovers not the squalor, impurity, and wretchedness which crowd behind the veneer of business-premises that extends along the south side of its old-admired Tron-gate. But, thanks to sanitary commissions, and to individual investigations, the true condition of that and other localities is becoming better understood; and the knowledge of it must—if not for very shame's sake, at least for safety's sake—lead, ere long, to some decided course of action being adopted for its erasure. In the meantime, however, the cry which occasionally rises is, "Root out, root out; open up new and healthful thoroughfares;" and we fail to hear the premonition, "Provide ye first for those who are to be rooted out." Here is a mistake which should be avoided. New and wholesome dwellings should first be prepared for the labouring population, then no bad consequences need be feared from driving away the occupants of these present unclean bot-beds, in any improvement which might be determined on in the localities referred to.

These few remarks were simply intended to refresh the public mind on a very important subject; and appeared necessary to preface the description of a building mentioned last week, as now being erected in Glasgow for Mr. James Lumsden, from the drawings and under the direction of Mr. James Wyllson, architect, by way of attempt at some improvement in the construction of dwellings for the industrious classes. It is only from experience, and by experiment, that the best mode of treating the subject can be ascertained: the wants and the habits of any one class will be found to be widely various in different localities: perhaps, for instance, the best arrangement of houses piled on one another which could be contrived for the Scottish artizan, would fail to reconcile his English brother to the loss of his cottage; and thus local peculiarities will ever have to be well marked and considered.

The building above referred to as being now under course of erection, is situated to the north of the Normal School, New City-road: it consists of four storeys, and contains in all thirty-one dwellings. The houses on each floor are ranged along a wide central passage, which communicates with the common staircase, and is lighted by a window at each end. The houses are arranged with the view to giving to their one main apartment the utmost value, by obviating as much as possible the necessity for performing any cleansing operations within it, and forming the bed-closets opening out of the same, so that there is no occasion for the occupants creating disorder by strewing their clothes about the room: for this purpose these closets, of which there are two in each house, as wide apart as possible, are made large enough to afford space for undressing and dressing in: each is closed with a door; but at the same time, in order that they may be ventilated, the side which is next the main apartment stands only about 7 feet high, so that the air of the house circulates freely through them. The bed bottoms are fixtures, and of rod-iron filled in with hooping, to prevent the propagation of insects, as well as the loss which is so great a grievance to the proprietors of small houses, from the use of the sparrow bed-bottoms for firewood. Each dwelling has also a scullery opening out of the main apartment, and containing a dresser, sink, coal-box, and press; and likewise a small well-aired larder in the outside wall; a kitchen grate, with oven and boiler; an ash-box with cinder-sieve in the hearth, which is of cast-iron, and includes a fender,—the latter being cast with it; and, opening from the small entrance lobby, is a water-closet, with apparatus of simple and economical construction, with, in one corner of it, a trap covering a shoot into a dust-shaft, through which all dry rubbish is conveyed to a cellar in the basement. Water is to be laid on in the scul-

lery; and a jet of gas, for certain hours, in the main apartment, as well as in the central or common passages and staircases. The ventilation of the houses is provided for by a louvred opening in the top of each window, and of the central passages by a few feet of the floor at either end being omitted,—thus permitting a free upward circulation to the roof, where there will be large louvred outlets. There is a wash-house outside, on the ground story, with all necessary appurtenances, including Robinson's rotary drying machine, which will be common to all the tenants in due succession.

It will be perceived from the description and annexed plan, that all the usual outhouses that so easily get out of repair, and are so offensive, are superseded; that the houses are so complete in themselves, in respect of their various conveniences, that nothing which could offend the senses need present itself in the common stairs or passages; and that, with the exception of the wash-house, the arrangements generally are calculated to afford the utmost privacy to the various families, one with another, and in themselves, that is compatible with the station to which they belong. One of the houses on the ground-floor has a room extra, and is meant to be occupied by a person having in his charge the general conservation of the property, including the collecting of the rents, cleaning the stairs, passages, and approaches, removal of rubbish, turning off the gas at a fixed hour, &c.

It is expected that these houses will be occupied by a superior grade of working people, as regards conduct, in whom employers may have such confidence as to become surety for their rents, and thus obviate the trouble of weekly payments, and the increase of rent unavoidably accompanying that mode of collection. The rent, which is looked for as sufficient to meet the views of the well-intentioned and energetic founder of this establishment, is 6*l.* per annum—a small sum as compared with the advantages which it offers to the labouring man.

Mr. Wyllson has given much thought to the subject, and we cannot do better than recommend those capitalists and others in his neighbourhood, who may feel disposed to follow Mr. Lumsden's example, to apply to him for his professional assistance.

#### IMPROVEMENT OF DWELLINGS FOR MIDDLE AND LOWER CLASSES.

SIR,—In the midst of multitudes of the oblong, square, and solid, key-stones of suggestive structure cut out of THE BUILDER'S abundant quarry by the newspaper press, and particularly the metropolitan, I have always looked in vain for any quotation from the various excellent articles on the adaptation of the dwellings to the means and wants of the middle and lower classes who reside within the bounds of the metropolis; and I have hence been forced to conclude that such suggestions either were not rightly understood, or were not palatable either to the readers of the newspaper press or to its conductors. Thus impressed, it is at least some consolation to perceive, from a quotation in last week's BUILDER, from the *Morning Herald*, on "The Building Mania," that THE BUILDER'S pioneering advances are, at least, working out a silent, if not an acknowledged appreciation of the defects of the present system, and a conviction of the necessity of a better.

It seems clear, indeed, that the value of ground, and the rate of rent throughout the metropolis, are becoming so great in relation to the means of tenants and the multiplicity of competition for all but the most distant and suburban localities, that houses in general have altogether ceased to be adapted to their destined and inevitable tenants, who, in order to enable them to pay rents so far above their means for the only houses suitable, in point of locality, to their purposes and pursuits, are compelled to adopt a system of sub-letting, or lodging-house keeping, for which the houses in question were not designed, and are most unsuitable.

The enormity of the spread of the metropolis is an evil and an inconvenience that must ere long be compensated by another and a more suitable mode of building, for the econo-

misation of space, or rather to suit the requirements of that crowding and inconvenient economisation of space which has now been so long at random work in subdividing tenements of increasing value, not designed for subdivision even though recently built or rebuilt on the old and out-of-date design. It is now, or shortly will be, the imperative duty of architects and builders to provide for these growing evils. The growth of the mighty Babylon in length and breadth must henceforth be so far superseded by, or swallowed up in a re-arrangement of its height. In place of spreading streets over a wider and still wider compass, one series of separate abodes must be raised upon the top of another, or rather the present series altered to suit the altered circumstances of the tenants and lodgers, or the altered value of the more and more precious space within the scattered outskirts of the less restricted and more beautiful, but less sought-for and more moderately valuable suburbs. The status of mere lodgers will thus be raised into that of tenants—householders—for each separate abode will thus, to all intents and purposes, be a separate house, and it is regarded as such in Edinburgh, where this very system has long been prevalent. Moreover, there the tenant of every "flat," or separate suite of apartments, is recognised by law as a separate householder; and why should it not be so with the citizens of London and the denizens of the metropolis at large? It is the most anomalous and ridiculous fact, not only that the metropolis, generally speaking, is a mere concourse of lodging-house keepers and lodgers, but that the poor devil who rents a house to make a livelihood by his richer and more respectable lodgers, and lives in the kitchens, cellars, or back premises, is the reputable "householder," while his superior of the first, second, aye, or even third floor, is "but a lodger!" This is not only a "great fact," but a great mistake, and the metropolis is a great deceiver in the eyes of all strangers—living in great houses totally unsuited to its small means, and imposing upon the world under false pretences.

And yet how little alteration of the old design, comparatively speaking, is requisite to bring up the style of dwelling to the modern style of occupation. Houses by thousands, by tens of thousands, are inhabited by several separate families. Why not adapt them to their purpose, then, by the accommodation at least of separate outer doors and small inner lobbies, with inner doors to each separately inhabited suite or floor. This is almost all that is absolutely requisite for privacy and independence, and for the elevation of the mere lodger of unfurnished apartments into a householder in effect at least, if not by law,—and if not by law, the sooner the Government and the Legislature assist in the elevation of the status of so numerous and respectable a host of her Majesty's liege subjects by making it law, the better.

The comfort and convenience—the avoidance of positive and continual mutual annoyance to multitudes—thus obtainable can only be appreciated by those who have experienced it. And amongst these I have no hesitation in classing myself: not only so, but I have also experienced the comforts of a separated suite of apartments, and therefore feel the barbarous change to be all the more grievous. On the other hand, I can also state from experience that every comfort and convenience obtainable in a self-contained house of several floors is obtainable in a separated floor, with water and gas-pipes, and other conveniences. Whereas, being unable here to expend 50*l.* or more in annual rent, my family and self are obliged to submit to what to us is the most disagreeable and annoying of all things, the deprivation of every comfort peculiar to a separate home.

I appeal to you, Sir, simply as one of those who are compelled to endure an offensive contact with strangers in the midst of his own family, which, in the metropolis of England, we indeed feel to be little less than barbarous, and which we certainly have ever been not only annoyed, but astonished, to find so prevalent—here above everywhere else. It is not for me, however, to enter into minutiae of recommendation as to the manner in which such a system should be overturned, as overturned it ought to be, and must be. Besides, that has been already repeatedly done in THE BUILDER.